

Commissioner's Budget Review Information

1. # of annual tests.... The Drug Laboratory tracks its work by the items, not by tests.
The lab analyzed 42,583 items in calendar year 2007. Included were 17,781 marijuana items, 10,156 cocaine items, 3,241 heroin items, and approximately 10,000 other types.
*note unlimited OT was available in calendar year 2007
2. # of samples received per day....The Lab received 44,122 items in calendar year 2007
The average number of samples received per month was 3,677. On average, each day, the lab received 184 items.
- 3 How long to process a test?.....The routine testing of a single bag of marijuana takes about 25-30 minutes from start to finish. The routine testing of a non-trafficking unknown powder sample involves preliminary testing by one chemist and then confirmatory testing by another chemist, using a GC/MS analytical instrument. The actual time from beginning to end is hard to calculate, but a chemist can normally complete an average of 20-25 cocaine or heroin analyses per week. Other items such as LSD,GHB and many pharmaceuticals (Oxycodone), take much longer to test than a cocaine or heroin sample. The time involved in analyzing a heroin or cocaine trafficking item, can be much greater, as multiple bags or units have to be tested to meet statistical requirements.
4. What is the backlog?....As of August 1,2008, the backlog was 10,492 items.
5. Staffing levels.....There are currently 12 FTE chemists working the bench in Boston and 2.5 FTE bench people in Amherst. There are 3.0 FTE people working in the Boston evidence office and 1.0 staff in the Amherst office.
6. How many expedited analyses are done by the lab?..... In FY 08, the Laboratory performed 1,927 expedited analyses.
7. What effect does doing expedited items have on the backlog?.....The result of doing expedited testing causes much more work for the office staff. Requests for expedited samples come into the office by phone or fax. The office staff has to record each request, and then pull the requested samples out of order, and assign them to available chemists. When the sample is completed, they then have to call the various District Attorney's with the results and fax over certificates of analysis.
8. Significant staffing increases are needed to meet the goals of the criminal justice system
9. No estimate on what to charge per analysis.